

This document contains the Connecticut regulations for Management of State Natural Area Preserves. This document was prepared by the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and is provided for the convenience of the reader. This is not the official version of the regulations. The official regulations are published by the State of Connecticut, Judicial Branch, Commission on Official Legal Publications in the Connecticut Law Journal. In the event there is inconsistency between this document and the regulations as published in the Connecticut Law Journal, the Connecticut Law Journal publication will serve as the official version.

Management of State Natural Area Preserves

Sec. 23-5c-1. Regulations for the management of state natural area preserves and procedures for the adoption of a management plan for each preserve

(a) General Provisions

(1) Definitions

As used in these regulations, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated below, except where the context requires otherwise:

(A) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Environmental Protection.

(B) "Site manager" means the individual, agency, or organization designated by the Commissioner who is in direct charge of a Natural Area Preserve and is responsible for the protection and care of that preserve in accordance with these rules and the Management Plan.

(C) "Management Plan" means a plan which sets forth in specific detail the purpose, character, resources, management, and other considerations for the protection and use of an individual Natural Area Preserve as described in subsection (b) of Section 23-5c-1.

(D) "Natural Area Preserve" or "preserve" is an area designated by the Governor of Connecticut pursuant to Section 23-5a to Section 23-5i of the general statutes.

(2) Applicability of regulations

These regulations shall apply to each Natural Area Preserve. There shall be a Management Plan for each natural area, such plan to be finalized according to the procedure and form provided in subsection (b) of Section 23-5c-1.

(3) Appointment of Site Manager

Each Natural Area Preserve shall have a site manager appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Commissioner who shall administer, manage, and protect the area in accordance with these regulations and the Management Plan.

(4) Reports

The site manager shall submit to the Commissioner an annual report and such other periodic reports in such form and at such time as the Commissioner may require. The annual report shall include a record of management activities, natural catastrophes, and other influences affecting conditions within the Natural Area Preserve.

(5) Encroachments

There shall be no encroachments on a Natural Area Preserve of structures, easements, rights of way, or land uses except for encroachments that are allowed by these regulations or a Management Plan. No other encroachments shall be allowed to continue or become established.

(6) Publicity

The Commissioner shall prepare information about Connecticut's Natural Area Preserves, which shall be made available to all interested persons. Publicity which would attract more visitors than is compatible with the use of an area shall be avoided.

(b) Plans

(1) General

A Management Plan shall be prepared for each Natural Area Preserve. Responsibility for the preparation of the Management Plan shall rest with the Commissioner or his designee.

(2) Review

(A) Each Management Plan shall be subject to public review as set forth in this subparagraph and shall become effective upon approval by the Commissioner. Public

review shall consist of a public hearing and a comment period of 20 days or more. Notice of the time and place of such hearing and notice of the availability of the proposed Management Plan shall be published in a newspaper having substantial circulation in the area where the preserve is located.

(B) The review procedure for designating a Natural Area Preserve shall be sufficient review for the Management Plan if the full plan is offered for review during that process.

(C) Revisions of the Management Plan shall be subject to public notice and review requirements as set forth in subparagraph (b) (2) (A) of Section 23-5c-1 except that a public hearing may be held at the discretion of the Commissioner, unless requested within 14 days from the date of publication of the notice in the newspaper. Revisions of the Management Plan shall become effective upon approval by the Commissioner.

(3) Rules

The Commissioner may establish rules governing the use and visitation of a Natural Area Preserve in the Management Plan for that preserve. Rules established by the Commissioner shall be consistent with these regulations and shall be clearly set forth in each Management Plan. Rules may apply to an entire preserve or to specified zones or subdivisions of a preserve.

(4) Contents

The Management Plan shall consist of text and maps. The amount of detail may vary according to circumstances. The following subjects shall be addressed in the Management Plan:

(A) Basic information on the preserve, including location, name, size, access, jurisdiction, and designation date.

(B) Purpose of the preserve, including general and specific goals.

(C) Resources of the preserve, including special geologic features, vegetation, and fauna.

(D) Use zones

(E) Special management problems and concerns

(F) Administration, including identification of the site manager and any special advisory committees, and enforcement bodies.

(G) Uses of the preserve, including trail construction and maintenance.

(H) Management provisions

(I) Deviations from general management rules

(c) **Structures and facilities**

(1) Boundary Markers and Fences

Natural Area Preserve boundary markers, fences, and barriers may be installed as provided by each Management Plan. Unless necessary to protect resources of the preserve, such boundary markers, fences, or barriers shall not be constructed in a manner that will create a detrimental effect on movement of wildlife or on other natural conditions. A survey of the preserve boundaries shall be kept on file with the Commissioner and with the clerk of each town where the preserve is located.

(2) Access Lanes

Vehicular access lanes shall be installed and maintained within a preserve only where deemed essential by the Commissioner for fire control or other management activities and in accordance with each Management Plan. Clearing for lanes will be of a minimum and to the width designated in the Management Plan. Lanes will be closed to all vehicles except service and emergency vehicles.

(3) Fire Breaks

Fire breaks shall be constructed when deemed necessary by the Commissioner and shall be kept to a minimum and constructed only in accordance with a Management Plan.

(4) Trails

Location and form of any trails other than natural wildlife paths shall be specified in each Management Plan. Trails shall be constructed to provide for permitted use of a Natural Area Preserve and to prevent deterioration of the area by uncontrolled traffic. Trail construction shall be kept to a minimum and designed to prevent soil erosion. Use of paving materials and elevated walks is permissible when necessary and provided for in a Management Plan. The trail plan shall conform to the goals of the Natural Area Preserve as stated in each Management Plan. Unless otherwise specified in a Management Plan, trails shall be for foot traffic only.

(5) Other Structures and Improvements

All other structures and improvements must be provided for in each Management Plan. Interpretive signs and structures to enhance environmental education are encouraged, but must be provided for in each Management Plan.

(d) **Land Management Practices**

(1) Landscape Management

There shall be no cutting of grass, brush, trees, or other vegetation, pruning of trees, removal of dead wood, opening of scenic vistas, or planting, except as provided in a Management Plan.

(2) Safety Precautions

Guard rails, fences, steps, and other devices necessary for visitor safety may be installed as provided in a Management Plan. Noxious plants and animals may only be controlled as provided for in a Management Plan or pursuant to Section 23-5i of the general statutes.

(3) Removal of or Introduction of Objects

Except as provided for in a Management Plan, there shall be no introduction to, removal from, or consumptive use of any material, product, object, plant, or animal in a Natural Area Preserve. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to, gathering of firewood or other plant or animal products and dumping, burying, or spreading of garbage, trash, or other materials.

(4) Water Control

Natural water regimes shall not be altered. Man-made water control structures may be either changed or maintained if provided for in a Management Plan as essential for the maintenance or restoration of natural conditions.

(5) Fire Control

No fires may be started in a preserve, except as specified in a Management Plan. Every effort will be made to prevent fires from spreading into a preserve. All uncontrolled fires shall be brought under control as quickly as possible. Any special procedures and methods to be used for prevention and control of fire shall be included in a Management Plan. As provided in Section 23-5i of the general statutes, nothing herein shall limit a duly appointed public authority from exercising responsibility related to the suppression of fire when such action is deemed necessary to protect public health or safety.

(6) Erosion Control

Natural erosion shall not be controlled. Erosion and soil deposition affecting a Natural Area Preserve due to past or present activities by man may be controlled in accordance with the provisions of a Management Plan.

(7) Management of Vegetation and Wildlife

(A) Control of vegetation—Controlled burning, mowing, grazing, and cutting of shrubs and trees may not be employed except as provided in a Management Plan. Control measures shall be applied with caution and only to that part of the preserve where they are necessary. Control measures shall be undertaken only with adequate prior study of the preserve and with evidence of necessity.

(B) Control of natural populations—There shall be no action to increase or reduce populations of native plants or animals or to restrict movement of wildlife across boundaries of a Natural Area Preserve, except as provided for in a Management Plan.

(C) Management of rare or endangered species—Habitat manipulations to favor particular rare or endangered species shall be undertaken if preservation of the species is designated in a Management Plan as a goal of the preserve. These manipulations shall be undertaken in such a manner as provided in a Management Plan.

(D) Introduction of plants or animals—No plants or animals shall be brought into a Natural Area Preserve except as provided in a Management Plan.

(8) Buffer Areas

Buffer areas shall be established adjacent to natural areas wherever possible, in order to minimize the adverse effects of external influences. Such areas may be managed for purposes which do not adversely affect the preserve. Buffer areas may be controlled by ownership, by dedication as part of the Natural Area Preserve or as a buffer to the preserve, by agreement, or by other appropriate means. Provision for buffer areas shall be included in the Management Plan where such areas are possible.

(e) Management of Visitors and Use

(1) Use Zones

A Natural Area Preserve may be divided into zones of allowable uses. Use of Natural Area Preserves shall be allowed only to such extent and in such manner as will not degrade the natural condition of the preserve. Zones shall be established giving consideration to the goals of the Natural Area Preserve as stated in the Management Plan and to the characteristics of the area such as use tolerance, natural attractions, and the presence of rare or easily disturbed species or features.

Location markers identifying the zones may be installed in the preserve.

(2) Character of Visitor Activity

The principal visitor activities in a natural area shall be walking and observing. Visitor presence and degree of development of trails and visitor-handling facilities shall be regulated to prevent disturbance of an area beyond what it can tolerate without permanent destruction. Visitors may be restricted to trails and may otherwise be restricted in movement or conduct as provided in a Management Plan.

Activities and uses which are likely to have an impact on the natural resources of the preserve are prohibited except as provided in a Management Plan. Prohibited activities include but are not limited to, picnicking, hunting, trapping, and removal, disturbance, molestation, or defacement of minerals, plants, animals, or natural features.

(3) Access Control

Ingress and egress may be restricted to such locations and such conditions as may be specified in a Management Plan.

(4) Research or Educational Activities

A person wishing to engage in research or educational activities in a Natural Area Preserve not otherwise authorized by these regulations or in the Management Plan for a Natural Area Preserve shall obtain approval from the Commissioner or his designee. The Commissioner may grant approval with such conditions and

restrictions as he or she deems necessary. A copy of the proposal for and results from any research conducted on a Natural Area Preserve must be given to the Commissioner. A person authorized to engage in educational or research activities shall notify the site manager before commencing and upon completion of such activities.

(f) Records

Records shall be kept in duplicate for each Natural Area Preserve. One copy shall be kept by the Commissioner and one by the site manager. These copies shall be open to the public at reasonable times and places. Information exempted from the Freedom of Information Act (CGS 24-2a) may be withheld if deemed necessary to protect the resources. The records shall include annual report by the site manager, the Management Plan, and other pertinent documentary material, studies, reports, and descriptions of significant events.

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